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Report Highlights:

The Russian Federation authority for sanitary and phytosanitary inspection accepts only federally-issued health certificates. Since no non-federal certificates are accepted, this report contains no matrix of required non-federal certificates, nor does it include copies of any certificates. Other required documentation must be prepared in Russian laboratories.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Disclaimer

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the American Embassy, Moscow, Russia, for U.S. exporters of food and agricultural products. While every effort has been made to ensure information in this report is accurate, information may be out of date or inaccurate because clear and consistent information is not available. U.S. exporters should consult with their foreign importers and consignees on documentary requirements before goods are shipped. Final import approval of any product is subject to the importing country's laws, regulations, standards, and rules in force at the time of importation, and as interpreted by border officials.

Section I. List of Export Certificates Required by the Russian Government

Before any agricultural product subject to health certification can be shipped to Russia, the importer of record must request an import permit from the Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (VPSS, known in Russian as Rosselkhoz nadzor). The importer of record relays a copy of this permit, which contains a list of sanitary or phytosanitary requirements the product must meet, to the exporter. This import permit is used by the appropriate U.S. Government agency to establish sanitary or phytosanitary requirements that must be documented in the export health certificate.

Russian import permits are typically issued in relation to a contract, and multiple lots and cargoes under this contract (i.e., multiple veterinary or phytosanitary certificates) may be issued on the basis of a single import permit. The import permit normally is valid for a specific time period, indicated on the permit, as well as for a maximum volume of product.

At present the Russian Federation requires that U.S. meat and meat by-products, including beef, pork, and poultry meat and by-products, come from plants certified as conforming to Russian requirements. The U.S. Government has received notice that similar requirements may soon be imposed on exports of fisheries products as well.

A certificate of origin and manufacturer's certificate of quality may additionally be required for certain agricultural products, especially those of animal origin. Russian Customs officials require the former document as proof of the country of origin to determine import tariffs, eligibility to enter under tariff rate quota (if applicable), and to prevent importation of products from countries under import restrictions not related to sanitary or phytosanitary issues. Certificates of origin are issued by producers or processors, depending on type of good, and are submitted as a support document for the customs declaration. It is usually signed by a plant manager or other responsible person.

The manufacturer's certificate of quality is used to determine whether the product conforms with product specifications of the contract and quality requirements as outlined in the Russian government's state standards for foodstuffs. This manufacturer's certificate of quality is not a substitute for the applicable U.S. Government-issued health certificate and is not accepted in lieu of such a health certificate. It is, rather, a document used to obtain a certificate of conformity after the product arrives in Russia. Exporters should consult with their importers to determine whether such certificates are needed for goods they intend to ship.

Any documents must be translated into the Russian language. This is typically done by the Russian importer.

This report does not provide detailed information on export health certificates issued by U.S. Government agencies, as up-to-date information on them is available from the relevant agencies on their websites. Such certificates include the following:

- USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), for live animals and animal genetics (semen and embryos), and products of plant origin subject to certification under terms of the International Plant Protection Convention. For further information on APHIS export certificates please visit the following pages on the APHIS website:

Live Animals and Animal Genetics

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie/iregs/animals/rs.html>

Products of Plant Origin

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/plant_exports/export_certificates_forms.shtml

- USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), for red meats, poultry meat, byproducts thereof, eggs, and egg products. For further information on FSIS export certificates, please visit the FSIS Export Library:

Red Meats, Poultry Meat, Eggs and Egg Products

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Russia_Requirements/index.asp

- Food and Drug Administration (FDA) certificates of free sale, for products regulated by that agency. For further information on certificates of free sale, please visit the FDA web site:

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~lrd/exp-cert.html>

- U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), for fish and seafood. For further information please visit the NOAA website at:

<http://seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov/Certupdate.htm>

The Russian Federation government requires for certain processed agricultural products a health certificate that no U.S. Government agency issues. At present no U.S. Government agency can issue a certificate for such products that VPSS will recognize as valid.

A list of products of plant origin requiring export health certification was provided most recently in GAIN report RS7011 "List of Products that Require Quarantine and Phytosanitary Certificates", <http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200702/146280075.pdf>.

A list of products of animal origin subject to veterinary control, in Russian but with tariff codes adjacent to aid in identification, is posted to the Russian Ministry of Agriculture website at http://www.mcx.ru/index.html?he_id=900&doc_id=14055.

In addition, VPSS maintains an official policy of accepting no "in-lieu-of" certificates, i.e., certificates issued for a new destination, when a shipment is redirected en route, in lieu of the inspection certificate issued for the original destination. Any exporter who obtains an in-lieu-of certificate for purposes of redirecting a cargo from some other destination to Russia does so at her or his own risk.

This report does not cover either product registration requirements or import certificates issued by Russian governmental authorities, such as the Russian Federal Service for

Consumer Protection and Human Well-Being (Rospotrebnadzor). Exporters should consult with their importers on such requirements.

Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificates

All federal sanitary and phytosanitary export health certificates for products exported to the Russian Federation are required by the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (VPSS). Certification is required to preserve public and animal health (certification of food and feed safety) and the environment (phytosanitary certifications with respect to quarantine pests). VPSS uses the health certificate to determine product origin for purposes related to health, safety and environmental protection.

Russian Customs officials use certificates of origin as proof of the country of origin to determine import tariffs, eligibility to enter under tariff rate quota (if applicable), and to prevent importation of products from countries under import restrictions not related to sanitary or phytosanitary issues.

The manufacturer's certificate of quality is used to determine whether the product conforms with product specifications of the contract and quality requirements as outlined in the Russian government's state standards for foodstuffs. The manufacturer's certificate of quality is not a substitute for the applicable U.S. Government-issued health certificate and is not accepted in lieu of such a health certificate. It is, rather, a document used to obtain a certificate of conformity after the product arrives in Russia.¹ Exporters should consult with their importers to determine whether such certificates are needed for goods they intend to ship. All other concerns are addressed by certifications obtained after the product crosses the border.

Some exporters provide quality certifications issued by survey companies, but these are not accepted by Russian authorities in lieu of federal export certificates. They are, rather, intended to assure importers that the product complies with contract specifications.

Section III. Specific Attestations Required on Export Certificates

Certificates of origin are issued by producers or processors, depending on type of good, and are submitted as a support document for the customs declaration. They are usually signed by a plant manager or other responsible person.

Section IV. Government Certificates' Legal Entry Requirements

Since April 30, 2006, originals of sanitary and phytosanitary certificates must accompany their cargoes. This requirement is part of an effort to reduce incidence of document fraud, and exceptions to this rule are not made. These certificates are valid for a single lot, as defined by Russian authorities: the lot must originate from a single facility during a single shift.

¹ Food products imported into Russia must either undergo "sanitary-epidemiological" inspection (including both laboratory examination and document review) by the Russian consumer protection authority, Rospotrebnadzor, on a shipment-by-shipment basis, or alternatively may be registered with Rospotrebnadzor. The advantage of registration is that subsequent shipments can pass through Russian Customs without additional "sanitary-epidemiological" inspection. It is, however, an expensive and time-consuming process, and is typically done by pre-shipment of samples for testing. Exporters should consult with their importers to determine the more cost-effective approach.

Failure to ensure that a certificate accompanies a shipment regularly causes cargoes to be arrested. In addition, certificate errors commonly arise from inaccurate information provided to the federal authority issuing the certificate (e.g., wrong container numbers, mistyped establishment numbers). Such errors result at best in significant demurrage costs and can lead to a shipment being turned back.

Suppliers' and manufacturers' export declarations are not accepted as an export health certificate. Derogation of export certification requirements is not possible.

Section V. Other Certificates/Accreditation Requirements

All other certificates required by the Russian government must be provided by the importer based on examination of the cargo after arrival. These include certificates of conformance and sanitary-epidemiological conclusions, which are issued exclusively by Russian laboratories following examination of the product after it arrives. Grain and oilseed product quality must also be certified on arrival by the grain inspection service of VPSS (see GAIN report RS7064 "Grain and Oilseeds Products Subject to Quality Control at Russian Border", <http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200709/146292479.pdf>). These certificates are the responsibility of the importer to obtain, and are necessary for imported products to be released for sale or use.

Russia ranked 143rd out of 179 countries listed on the 2007 Corruption Perception Index (see http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2007) of Transparency International. Counterfeiting and alteration of shipping documents, including import permits and export health certificates, constitute a serious problem in Russia. Traders are routinely confronted by both corrupt officials seeking to extort bribes in return for turning a blind eye to non-existent or obviously fake documents, and schemes by dishonest traders to deceive Russian officials with fraudulent documents. American exporters should be aware that under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (see <http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa/>) and other applicable U.S. and Russian laws, payment of bribes and engaging in or abetting fraud in the course of a foreign trade transaction is a criminal act.

Relevant GAIN Reports

RS7010 Russian Grain Inspection Update
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200701/146280064.pdf>

RS7011 List of Products that Require Quarantine and Phytosanitary Certificates
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200702/146280075.pdf>

RS7029 VPSS Solicits Public Comment on Draft Import Permit Regulation
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200703/146280641.pdf>

RS7038 Customs Service Announces New Procedures
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200704/146280952.pdf>

RS7061 FAIRS Annual
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200709/146292340.pdf>

RS7064 Grain and Oilseeds Products Subject to Quality Control at Russian Border
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200709/146292479.pdf>

RS7323 FAIRS Wine
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200707/146291722.pdf>